



# SEAPORT

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO: CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS, & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

## LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

The Seaport seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased in July 2003 to 4.8 percent from June's rate of 4.4 percent, as shown in Seaport Table 1. In July 2002 the rate was 5.0 percent. In July 2003 the Seaport's *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* decreased by 50 jobs because of temporary layoffs in *Education*. These temporary layoffs were expected and followed seasonal trends because of summer vacation. The August and September numbers will show an increase as teachers return to classrooms. On the plus side, two industries, *Food Manufacturing* and *Construction*, created new jobs in July. Employment in *Food Manufacturing* increased for the pea harvest and *Construction* increased because of residential remodels.

## SPECIAL TOPIC:

### Port of Lewiston

Lewiston resident Troy Mitchell gathered 2,550 signatures on petitions calling for the dissolution of the Port of Lewiston, though he said he really doesn't want to get rid of the port, just its property tax subsidy. "The Port has done a fine job most of the time in fulfilling its economic development purpose," Mitchell said during his opening testimony in an almost six-hour hearing in August. The Nez Perce County Commission, charged with deciding whether to put the dissolution issue of the Port of Lewiston on the November ballot, voted 3-0 against putting the question to the voters. Not one person said dissolution was a good idea, not even those who spoke in favor of the petition, said Commissioner J.R. Van Tassel. "I see no issue," he said when all the testimony indicated a desire to keep the port. Some of the public comments both for and against the issue follow.

### Against:

- ✓ The \$450,000 property tax levy for 2004 would cost residents about \$63.00 for every \$100,000 of taxable value.
- ✓ The port was created and people voted for it to acquire low-cost transportation, not to buy land and create competition for businesses already operating here.

Seaport Table 1: Labor Force & Employment

Nez Perce County, Idaho and Asotin County, Washington

	July 2003*	June 2003	July 2002	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	36,600	36,290	35,370	0.9	3.5
Unemployment	1,760	1,610	1,780	9.3	-1.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.8	4.4	5.0		
Total Employment	34,840	34,680	33,590	0.5	3.7
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	36,510	36,290	35,240	0.6	3.6
Unemployment	1,610	1,500	1,610	7.3	0.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.4	4.1	4.6		
Total Employment	34,900	34,790	33,630	0.3	3.8
<b>JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS</b>	26,590	26,640	27,590	-0.2	-3.6
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	4,530	4,380	4,960	3.4	-8.7
Natural Resources & Mining	190	190	260	0.0	-26.9
Construction	1,030	1,000	1,220	3.0	-15.6
Manufacturing	3,310	3,190	3,480	3.8	-4.9
Wood Product Manufacturing	550	550	630	0.0	-12.7
Food Manufacturing	250	120	240	108.3	4.2
Paper Manufacturing	1,220	1,210	1,260	0.8	-3.2
Other Manufacturing	1,290	1,310	1,350	-1.5	-4.4
<b>Service-Providing Industries</b>	22,060	22,260	22,630	-0.9	-2.5
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	5,560	5,550	5,470	0.2	1.6
Wholesale Trade	630	620	650	1.6	-3.1
Retail Trade	3,620	3,620	3,540	0.0	2.3
Utilities	90	90	90	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,220	1,230	1,190	-0.8	2.5
Information	360	360	370	0.0	-2.7
Financial Activities	1,670	1,690	1,780	-1.2	-6.2
Professional & Business Services	1,440	1,460	1,580	-1.4	-8.9
Education & Health Services	3,780	3,760	3,810	0.5	-0.8
Leisure & Hospitality	2,590	2,590	2,730	0.0	-5.1
Other Services	1,190	1,180	1,140	0.8	4.4
Government Education	2,010	2,240	2,110	-10.3	-4.7
Government Administration	2,590	2,550	2,740	1.6	-5.5
Government Tribes	870	870	900	0.0	-3.3

\*Preliminary Estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

### For:

- ✓ The river system is Lewiston's answer to the lack of a freeway.
- ✓ The Port has had three decades of development, including the Business and Technology Park east of Thain Grade where Interventional Pain Consultants Surgical Center is expected to break ground next week and Regence BlueShield is expected to build in the next two years.
- ✓ The Port brought West/Best, now Swift Transportation, to Lewiston when it could have relocated to Sacramento, California. It employs 529 people in Lewiston.

- ✓ The Port developed the Southport area where ATK, formerly Blount, expanded and employs about a third of its 700 workers. The state also built a new juvenile corrections center there that employs 50 people.
- ✓ Sheldon Jackson, a Spokane developer whose company has spent more than \$30 million on the Nez Perce Plaza so far, said the land in the Public Utilities District generated less than \$3,000 in property taxes in 2000. In 2002 that land contributed \$250,000 in property taxes.
- ✓ Several Potlatch Corporation employees, some from management and others from labor organizations, said low-cost water transportation is essential to being part of the global economy, and means jobs and growth for the region. Potlatch pays \$110 million in wages in Nez Perce County, said David Weisel, union official. "We're global and we're competing with everyone under the sun."
- ✓ Fifty-five percent of lentils, dry peas, and chickpeas are exported, and 30 percent of those begin their journey at the Port of Lewiston, said Tim D. McGreevy of Moscow, executive director of the U.S. Dry Pea and Lentil Council. More than \$25 million worth of product will pass through the Port of Lewiston this year.
- ✓ Idaho State Senator Joseph Stegner of Lewiston said Pocatello and Coeur d'Alene are trying to change the state's port statutes so they can have one, too. The reputation of Lewiston's port generates two things, he said: envy and pride.

## **AREA DEVELOPMENTS**

### **Clearwater County**

- The 2003 fire season has been a hot one on both the Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests. The economic impact of a fire is difficult to judge. On one side there is a loss of tourism as roads close and smoke obscures views. Businesses whose livelihoods are dependent upon the forests are constrained. Restrictions are imposed on such activities as operating chainsaws or other equipment powered by an internal combustion engine, curtailing logging, road building, and other activities. On the plus side, even with the loss of tourists, merchants are able to increase sales to fire fighters who need supplies, and equipment contractors are able to lease equipment to the Forest Service to fight fires.

### **Idaho and Lewis Counties**

- A Kooskia lumber mill, Clearwater Forest Industries, is down to a single shift and one of its owners is blaming reductions in sales from federal forests. In the 1980s, Robert Krogh ran two mills, Clearwater Forest Industries (CFI) in Kooskia and Ida-Pine in Grangeville. Ida-Pine closed in 1994 and the weekly operational hours at CFI in Kooskia have gradually been cut back from 80 to 60 to 50, and about two months ago, to 40 hours, Krogh says. "We're just trying to get by as efficiently as we possibly can. . . . We're in a survival mode. Hopefully when things get better, we'll still be around." Krogh joins a chorus of lumber executives who are worried about timber supply. Bill Mulligan, owner of Three Rivers Timber in Kamiah, has said his operation is challenged because it's difficult to find logs to feed his mill.

Bennett Forest Industries is considering a number of options, including closing its doors in Elk City or moving the operation to Clarkston. All mill officials point to declining harvests in national forests as the reason.

### **Latah County**

- The University Pointe, a retail and professional building on Sixth Street in Moscow, was completed in June, though much of the building's 20,000-square feet of leasable space has remained vacant. Quizno's sandwich shop has been the only tenant. But one owner of the building says the vacancy situation is about to change. A women's fitness center, Curves For Women, moved into a 2,500-square-foot space in August. Taco Del Mar restaurant, occupying 2,000-square feet, will follow. Other tenants who are close to signing leases include Leon's beauty salon, which used to be in the now-closed Moscow Emporium, and Cougar Communications, a cell phone company. Owners say only one space remains available on the first floor. The professional office space that occupies the second floor also is vacant, but negotiations are continuing with a number of prospective tenants. When University Pointe is 75 percent full, the second phase of the project, construction of an identical building, will begin next door.

### **Nez Perce and Asotin (Washington) Counties**

- Teleperformance USA in Lewiston laid off 60 workers in August when the company closed its Lewiston office. The Telemarketing Sales Rule, a federal law passed this year that makes it easier for consumers to block telemarketing calls, was a factor in the decision to close the Lewiston office. Teleperformance USA, a teleservices agency, was founded a decade ago and grew to 30 contact centers with 4,100 workstations in the United States and operations in Canada, Mexico, the Philippines, India, and Argentina. The jobs added diversity to the local economy and will be missed by those looking for a first job or a job that doesn't require physical movement.
- Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC) School of Technology has received a \$28,000 grant to purchase a computer numerical control milling machine. The 3,800-pound machine, which mills metal, displays an image of the cut to be made. It's the latest technology and will give LCSC students an edge with potential employers, say School of Technology officials. The money was provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's rural development program, which awards grants to stimulate economic growth and job creation.

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